

Llyswen Station
218 Logan Blvd.
Llyswen Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5898

HABS

PA

7-ALTO

140 -

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LLYSWEN STATION

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Location: 218 Logan Blvd.

Date of Erection: 1895-96

Architects: Michael and Louis Beezer

Description: This romantic wood-frame cottage has a veneer of irregularly coursed river stone on the first story, with wood shingles above. The complex roof is side-gabled but drops to a hipped roof over the porte cochere, and rises to a steep pyramidal peak over the prominent front dormer, which in turn has its own hipped attic dormer. Paired knee-brace brackets decorate the eaves of the main dormer on either side of two double casements, each with small square lights outlining a larger pane of glass. Decoratively exposed rafters accent the first-story eaves, along with large knee-brace brackets at either end of the roof line. The front of the building has two round arches. One marks the entry; the other provides symmetry and visual interest. The more elliptical arches of the porte cochere end in battered stone pillars that flare to buttresses. The stone pillar at the northeast corner of the building repeats the effect. Original double casements on the facade have cut-stone sills and small rectangular lights over the larger main lights. The unusual entry beneath the porte cochere is a multi-light door incorporated into a wide pointed arch of many separate lights, the whole one large decorative window.

History: Begun in 1895 and completed in 1896 by the Altoona Suburban Home Company and therefore one of the first buildings on the Llyswen plot, this was the original Llyswen passenger station on the Altoona and Logan Valley Electric Railway between Altoona and Lakemont Park. The distinctive image of this quaint Beezer Brothers design was a prominent feature of advertisements for the suburb that stressed the healthful and aesthetic advantages of suburban living, made so convenient by the streetcars that passed every fifteen minutes. Patrick W. Finn, whose firm specialized in architectural stone work, was the contractor for the building. In 1903, the development company sold the Llyswen station for \$2,000 to John Currie, foreman of the PRR's roundhouse No. 1, and his wife, Mary. The Curries converted the stone building into a residence and lived there for ten years. The station's function, meanwhile, was supplanted by small wood shed-roofed platforms at frequent intervals along the tracks, which ran down the center of present Logan Boulevard. Attorney Charles Kurtz bought the house in 1913 for \$3,600. In 1921 he and his wife sold it to Dr. Augustus Kech, who lived there with his wife, Edna, for many years. The Kech's sold the property to another doctor in 1945, and for most of the 1950s it belonged to an interior decorator. It is not clear to what extent either the doctors or the decorator kept an office in the house. Throughout the 1960-70s it was the office of Dr. Irvan Boucher, who lived on Aldrich Avenue. Since 1985 the former station has been an insurance agency. In summer 1989 the back yard was converted to paved parking.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Illustrated Altoona, 4. Beezer Brothers' catalogs: 1894, 1897, 1899. Altoona Suburban Home Company ledgers and board minutes. Deed books: 143/281, 221/632, 221/636, 291/500, 396/519, 396/521, 413/679, 413/681, 503/38, 548/300, 548/303, 577/481, 623/79, 665/167, 760/312, 1040/540, 1059/719, 1078/147, 1095/752, 1117/57, 1166/549.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of Llyswen (HABS No. PA-5787) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Kathy Edwards in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Edwards's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.